



**Send In The Clown**  
There was no humor for Indianapolis.  
Page B2.

**Faded Glory**  
Is there life after college athletics?  
Page B1.



**Holdin' Out**  
The verdict's in, but the hope remains.  
Page A1.

# Winston-Salem Chronicle

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30 Pages This Week

## Hunt gets life in prison ...

By ROBIN ADAMS  
Chronicle Assistant Editor

Darryl Eugene Hunt sat silently, with a tear running down his face, as the clerk of court read the jury's decision.

Hunt was found guilty last Friday of first-degree murder in the killing of newspaper copy editor Deborah B. Sykes.

Hunt sat equally silent three days later as that same jury sentenced him to life in prison. The jury's alternate sentence was death.

Outside the courtroom, said bailiffs, Hunt broke into uncontrollable tears after the jury's first verdict and cried out "I didn't do it, I didn't do it."

The jury's verdict brought the 15-day trial to an end. The state's case was based on the testimony of three eyewitnesses who identified Hunt as the murderer and a former girlfriend of Hunt's who gave police a statement that indicated that Hunt and Sammy Mitchell, his best friend, were involved in the murder. Mitchell was not

on trial and has not been charged in the Sykes killing.

Sykes' body was found on Aug. 10 in a grassy slope behind the Crystal Towers senior citizens apartment complex. Sykes had been raped, sodomized and stabbed 16 times. The fatal wound was a stab to the heart.

District Attorney Donald Tisdale had asked for the death penalty.

Hunt's defense was based on destroying the credibility of the state's eyewitnesses, the lack of physical evidence linking Hunt with the crime and Hunt's alibi.

The jury deliberated for 15 hours. During those deliberations, the jury came back to the courtroom to ask for additional information, a visit to the murder scene and "physical, factual distances." Presiding Judge Preston Cornelius denied their requests but allowed them to review unspecified documents in the courtroom.

As the clerk of court read the verdict, Please see page A15

## ... Defense team keeps working

By ROBIN ADAMS  
Chronicle Assistant Editor

The jury has rendered its verdict and a sentence has been passed, but the case against Darryl Eugene Hunt is just beginning, say black community leaders.

The Baptist Ministers Conference and Associates voted on Tuesday at its regular meeting to begin raising more funds for the Darryl Hunt Defense Committee. A goal of \$25,000 has been set; the money will be used to finance Hunt's appeal to the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals.

In addition, said the Rev. Carlton Eversley, chairman of the public affairs committee of the predominantly black minister's group, expert attorneys will be retained to handle the appeal.

"Hunt's attorneys (Gordon Jenkins and S. Mark Rabil) admitted that this was their first time in a capital case," said Eversley. "They were up against someone who has a long history of throwing blacks in jail. They did the best job they could. They spared his life."

"An appeal is difficult, and we need the best legal minds possible. Jenkins and Rabil are like Byron Scott (second-year guard for the Los Angeles Lakers), they got us to the championship but it takes a Kareem Abdul-Jabbar to win it all."

This is the first issue, said Eversley, that has brought all the ministers together and caused them to speak as fervently as they have.

Please see page A15

## Daniels quits race

By DAVID R. RANKIN  
Chronicle Staff Writer

Joe Daniels, who announced his intentions to seek office during the winter, has decided to withdraw from the Northeast Ward aldermanic race.

Daniels, a 17-year resident of Winston-Salem and an active Democrat, had been one of three candidates in a race that included high school assistant principal Victor Johnson and incumbent Alderman Vivian H. Burke.

Daniels said he won't run for the alderman's seat that Burke has held for three terms because of a recent job change and the financial demands of putting his two daughters through college.

"I have a financial responsibility to put my two Please see page A3



Daniels: He's making it a two-person race (photo by James Parker).

## Enabling legislation clears new hurdle

By BILL HAMILTON  
Chronicle Staff Writer

The proposed state legislation to enable the Winston-Salem Board of Aldermen to promote the use of minority and women contractors in city construction projects has cleared another hurdle in Raleigh.

The bill, sponsored by state House Rep. Annie Brown Kennedy, passed a test of constitutionality requested by the chairman of the House Judiciary I Committee. The chairman had requested that the attorney general's office examine the bill to see if it was within the scope of local government's powers.

The attorney who reviewed it, Douglas Johnston, said the bill was constitutional, in his opinion, from the standpoint of what local governments may do. Kennedy said the fact that the bill meets constitu-

tional requirements from the attorney general's standpoint "strengthens chances for passage tremendously."

In another development, Kennedy said that the version of the bill scheduled to be voted out of committee this week removes certain restrictions. An early amendment sought to give minority and women contractors in the coliseum and uptown development projects up to 10 percent of the business. The 10 percent "cap" is still in place, but the eligible projects have been expanded to all city projects, not just the two originally mentioned.

"This is a great advantage ... the bill is simpler and stronger now," Kennedy said.

On another front, the House Appropriations Committee has voted to include \$35,000 in the Please see page A3

## WSSU gets chancellor

### Thompson: He wanted the job

By ROBIN ADAMS  
Chronicle Assistant Editor

Officially, he doesn't begin his duties until Aug. 1.

But unofficially, he's already on the job. Well, at least he's doing part of the job. He's paving the way for a smooth transition.

Dr. Cleon F. Thompson Jr., 53, the new chancellor of Winston-Salem State University, was in town Tuesday morning to talk with interim chancellor Dr. Haywood Wilson. Thompson also took time out from his visit to talk with the Chronicle.

"It's indeed an honor and privilege to be given this opportunity," said Thompson as

the interview started, referring to his new position.

Thompson becomes WSSU's seventh chancellor and replaces Dr. H. Douglas Covington, who resigned almost one year ago to take over as president of Alabama A&M University in Normal, Ala.

Thompson now serves as vice president for student services and special programs for the University of North Carolina system's general administration. Thompson served as interim chancellor at North Carolina A&T State University from 1980 to 1981. His primary function with the general administration has been to operate Please see page A3



Dr. Cleon Thompson wants to make sure that his transition will be smooth (photo by James Parker).

## Hunt refuses plea bargain

By ROBIN ADAMS  
Chronicle Assistant Editor

Observations while covering the Darryl Hunt trial:

• According to Alderman Larry Little, the state offered Hunt a plea bargain on Thursday night, one day before the jury returned its verdict. District Attorney Donald Tisdale asked Hunt to plead guilty to second-degree murder, but Hunt, said Little, refused.

"Darryl said, 'I won't plead guilty to something I know nothing about,'" said Little.

• The state's key witness in its case against Hunt, Johnny Gray, also known as McConnell, was

released from jail on Wednesday afternoon, June 12, the day jury deliberations began. Gray was arrested on March 12 and charged with common-law robbery. Gray, who remained in jail until last week, was under a \$50,000 bond. The jacket of Gray's warrant noted that Gray could not be released without the approval of the district attorney.

Gray was released from jail on his own recognizance with a \$5,000 unsecured bond.

After hearing of Gray's release, many of the Hunt supporters attending the trial were outraged and called his release his payoff for his testimony against Hunt.

Please see page A16

## The Pain

They came. They listened.  
They prayed. They sang. They hoped.  
They waited. But mostly they cried.



Photos by James Parker